



New Hampshire Web Page Guidelines for 4-H Groups

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Introduction

Many 4-H clubs/groups want to enter the world of cyberspace by creating a web site of their own. This guide was created to help you plan, create and be safe in your creation. It's only a start, though. You can find a lot more detailed information on the Internet or at your local library.

Content/Planning

Before you plan your 4-H group/club web page, ask yourself the following questions:

- ❖ Why do you want to have a web site? To tell people about 4-H? To attract new members? To publicize group/club activities?
- ❖ Who do we want to use this site? Only members or the general public?
- ❖ How old will members of the audience for the web site be?
- ❖ What information will users want to find?
- ❖ What will make users come back to our site?

Once you've decided on the main purpose for your web page, you can

begin to design and map it. You might want to use a template; there is a list of helpful sites with templates at the end of this document.

Make sure that you and at least one other person proofread your web page for spelling and grammar.

Safety

- ❖ It's never a good idea to include your full name, address or phone number on a web page. Although many businesses and others do publicize this kind of information, it's probably best that as a 4-H youth, you don't include any personal information about yourself that would allow anyone to find you at home.
- ❖ Contact information for your group/club can be accomplished by including an email address to "Webmaster". This can be set up so that the sender only sees "Webmaster", but the message is forwarded to your adult 4-H leader's email. This technique won't let the general public know what their email address is. You can change the email address and trade off correspondence duties with someone else. Always ask before you put someone else's email address on your web page.

- ❖ If you use photographs of people on your web page, you should get parental permission and you should never include their names with their pictures. It's best to take pictures for the web page so that you can't really recognize someone from the picture. You can take pictures over someone's shoulder and to see what they are doing but not see their face. You can take pictures of action that are far enough away that you can't recognize faces as well.
- ❖ Some commercial web site providers allow you to set up a protected area. This part of your web site requires a user name and a password to view it. Although this can only be viewed by people who have your permission to view it, don't include personal contact information here either, unless, it's necessary. There are dishonest individuals that might be able "hack" their way in.

Legal/4-H Policies

- ❖ The use of the 4-H clover is governed by copyright laws and full details can be found at the following web site: http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/emblem/4h_name.htm. You can download an electronic version of a black and white or green and white official 4-H clover from this site.
- ❖ You don't need permission to use the clover or 4-H name as long as:
 - ◆ The use is consistent with 4-H educational purposes, character-building objectives, and the dignity of the 4-H program.
 - ◆ The clover is given a position of prominence.
 - ◆ You don't change the clover in any way, by adding other objects or letters to it or changing the shape of it.
 - ◆ There is no obvious or implied endorsement of commercial products or services associated with the clover's use.
- ❖ If you have a web site, please let your county Extension office know of its web address or URL. They may be able to provide a link from their county page to your web site. In addition, if you have a protected area (required login and password), please give your 4-H County Educator a login and password for this.
- ❖ Your 4-H group/club web site should not use graphics or language that, in any way, discriminate or offend.
- ❖ Appropriate topics on your 4-H group/club web site include, but are not limited to:
 - ◆ Group/club related activities and events.
 - ◆ Information about your group/club, including what kinds of projects members carry, a webmaster email contact for people who want more information about your group/club (see Safety Guidelines above).
 - ◆ Links to other 4-H pages, or to web sites that pertain to the

activities or projects your group/ club is involved in. For example, the national 4-H Technology Page at <http://www.4-h.org/tech/>. Always check out web pages that you link to and be sure the content is appropriate. Would you show the linked site your little brother or sister? To your group/ club leader? To your clergyman?

- ❖ Make sure you follow copyright laws when you use information, pictures or graphics that you didn't create. If you use a graphic from a clip art site or CD that you've purchased, you don't need to worry about copyright, but if you've downloaded a graphic or photo from another web page, you may need permission from the author to use.

Layout

- ❖ Your site should be organized. The important information should be at the top and in larger or bolder letters than less important information. You might include a brief list of topics, with target links to specific areas of your page.
- ❖ When designing the layout of your page, you should start with a pencil and paper. Draw out a flow chart or map of what you want your page to look like.
- ❖ Remember the "Three Click Rule". It should never take more than three clicks to get to anything on your web page.
- ❖ Use tables to organize information if it makes sense.

- ❖ Use white space around text and graphics.

Colors

- ❖ Just because you have more than 200 colors available to use, doesn't mean you have to use them all! Use only a few colors that coordinate and are easy on your eye.
- ❖ A good rule of thumb is to use a light background with darker letters.
- ❖ Avoid red letters because some people are colorblind and cannot see red letters.
- ❖ Try printing your web page on a black and white printer AND a color printer. Is it legible on both types of printers?

Graphics

- ❖ If you use buttons, lines or textured backgrounds, they should coordinate and not overpower the text or make it difficult to read.
- ❖ Some photographs or large graphic files are slow to open. Remember that some people may be viewing your page with a slow modem. Minimize the use of very large files.
- ❖ Make sure the font (type of letters) is large enough to see, even on a small monitor.
- ❖ Don't use ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. It's very difficult to read and it is the same as shouting on the Internet.

Technical

- ❖ Always test your web page by viewing it with at least two different browsers – like Netscape Communicator and Internet Explorer. Sometimes what looks great in one of these browsers, doesn't work at all in the other one.
- ❖ Do all of the external and internal target links work? You will have to test these individually and test them on a regular basis. There's nothing more annoying than links that don't go anywhere or that go to the wrong site.
- ❖ Do email links work? Try sending an email from your web page and make sure the right person receives it. Will this person respond to messages in a timely manner?
- ❖ How fast does the page load? Test this on as slow a modem as you can find.
- ❖ Limit the total size of your page (megabytes). It will take less memory to store it and your Internet Service Provider or web page host may limit the size of your file(s).

Other Sources of Information

Creating a Website for Your 4-H Program - This site is dedicated to assisting 4-H organizations in finding

their place on the World Wide Web. This page covers tools that can be used to create websites, HTML tutorials, website templates, and the 4-H website guidelines.

<http://ca4h.org/compcorps/webdesign/websitedesign.asp>

How Web Pages Work – Great write up on HTML, creating tables and frames and using images in your web page.

<http://computer.howstuffworks.com/web-page.htm>

Google – Use your favorite search engine for free clip art, web templates, etc. www.google.com

Web Hosting

- ❖ Your current ISP (Internet Service Provider) probably offers web site space as part of your monthly fee. Check with them and you will have the most control over the site.
- ❖ Sometimes your town or municipality will allow groups to use part of their server.
- ❖ Free web hosting is available, but be VERY careful. You won't be able to control pop up ads or other advertising that occurs without your permission.

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